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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANTANANARIVO 000662

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MA](#)

SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE

REF: A. ANTANANARIVO 659
[1](#)B. ANTANANARIVO 643
[1](#)C. ANTANANARIVO 634
[1](#)D. ANTANANARIVO 642

Classified By: AMBASSADOR NIELS MARQUARDT FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY: As the opposition grows more unified in its bid to force a return to the negotiating table (ref A), relations among competing factions within the High Transitional Authority (HAT) appear to have hit a low point. HAT President Andry Rajoelina may be seeking to resolve the current impasse by either stepping down himself, or (preferably) forcing Prime Minister Monja to do so. The latter scenario at least could lead toward a resolution of the crisis. Their continued tandem rule was the reason Maputo II broke down on August 27, and remains the most obvious indicator of the HAT's bad-faith interpretation of the August 9 Maputo I accords. In any case, the status quo cannot persist; if the two leaders cannot agree to separate voluntarily, then one may seek to unseat the other, or the military may still consider stepping in (ref B). Whether or not the opposition can rally enough support to stage protests on the scale of February or March 2009, their continued agitation -- along with mounting international pressure -- may be enough to keep the HAT off balance, permitting the conflict of personalities within to play out on its own. END SUMMARY.

RAJOELINA NERVOUS, WHILE MONJA DIGS IN

[1](#)2. (S) The HAT of President Andry Rajoelina and PM Roindfo Monja has failed in its recent bid to simply "move on" by unilaterally expanding its government (ref C), "implementing" Maputo by decree (with Presidential Ordinance 2009-09 on September 8), and appealing directly to the international community (ref D) for assistance with elections. They now face growing enthusiasm for targeted sanctions from SADC and the AU, and their recent posturing has given the USG and EU partners ever less to work with as decisions on AGOA, the EU's Cotonou process, and EU commercial agreements draw closer. The three opposition parties have given the HAT until September 20 to return to negotiations, and although they have yet to deliver on promised anti-HAT demonstrations in Antananarivo and elsewhere, they have managed to maintain unity in their minimal demands for upholding the Maputo Process begun in August. On September 15, a local intermediary told Ambassador Marquardt that Rajoelina is aware of the dire problems he's facing, and may be seeking a way out, possibly out of fear for his life from none other than his own Prime Minister.

[1](#)3. (S) While Rajoelina may now have a better grip on current reality, Monja and many in his cabinet appear to be seeking to further entrench themselves. On September 14, HAT

Minister of Justice Christine Razanamahasoa said she was "shocked" by recent declarations from opposition leaders (notably former president Albert Zafy) denying the existence of a legitimate government; this has "created confusion in the minds of the people" she alleged, before stating that the current opposition alliance represents "a new movement, not covered by the Maputo accords" -- and therefore not an entity they are obliged to deal with. In response to recent low-level protests in Antananarivo, a former TIM senator has been arrested, and several pro-Ravalomanana organizers are currently either wanted or in detention; Monja has made clear his intention to use these small demonstrations as a pretext for avoiding or delaying further dialogue. RAO sources also indicate that Monja is actively countering Zafy's moves to stir up provincial support by providing financing to the 22 HAT-appointed Regional Chiefs.

LOOKING FORWARD: SEVERAL OPTIONS

¶4. (C) The most tempting option for the embattled HAT remains the status quo: in the face of difficult leadership questions over the duration of this crisis, successive administrations have routinely chosen inaction over compromise or confrontation. Rajoelina can remain silent, Monja can continue throwing resources at the some in the security forces and silencing opposition voices, and the HAT can continue hoping that the three other movements' support fails to materialize in the capital and elsewhere. However, this path is also the straightest line to further aid and trade cuts and other possible sanctions over the next 90 days, and this administration has yet to deliver on its promised ties to "non-traditional" donors or any semblance of diplomatic

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recognition from any quarter. Rajoelina may hope that his planned trip to New York for UNGA on September 20 will yield some useful diplomatic dividends, but that remains an unlikely scenario in the face of across-the-board international condemnation of his having derailed the Maputo Process.

¶5. (S) With the status quo an untenable option, something will have to give. The quickest route back to the Maputo Process would be for either Rajoelina or Monja to step down, or be forced out -- preferably the thuggish Monja. Monja has already rejected the opportunity to do so, even when offered a dignified and substantial role in the transition as president of the upper house of Parliament. If Rajoelina manages to fire him (and it's not evident that he can), he would be free to replace him with a consensus candidate, thus putting Maputo back on the rails. This could provoke a dangerous response from those loyal to and directed by Monja, however, including the unpredictable Special Intervention Force (FIS) of the widely-feared Lt. Colonel Charles Andrianasoavina, as well as Monja's ethnic-Antandroy support base in south-west Madagascar. However, with the right incentives (including a renewed attempt to move him laterally within the transition institutions), this route probably would permit a return to talks potentially leading to a resolution.

¶6. (S) If Rajoelina is unable to remove Monja, however, he may opt to step down himself -- or be forced out by Monja. This would theoretically open the way for the appointment of a consensus President of the Transition, perhaps a respected and rather neutral person like newly-named Vice President Guy Rajamieson. It is also possible, however, that Monja would seek to elevate himself to the presidency, thus enabling himself (per the Maputo I accords) to run in an eventual presidential election from which all other members of the transition government are barred from participation. While there is declining popular affection and support for the affable but inept Rajoelina, Monja is widely despised across the political spectrum, generally seen as an opportunistic, dishonest thug, and thus he would be far more divisive as the new leader. He would have to rely on power, rather than

popularity, to remain in office -- a dubious and probably ephemeral proposition.

¶7. (S) Should none of these scenarios play out, there remains the possibility that the military will eventually cave to pressures from the opposition (and from the tired people of Madagascar) to intervene "responsibly". Recent conversations with opposition leaders indicate that the current military leadership understands the problems and incompetence of the current administration. Nonetheless, they may be reticent to get involved for fear of being saddled with and blamed for these problems themselves. With weak command and control, and lingering fear that some in the opposition still seek to reinstall Ravalomanana (anathema to many in the military who fear retribution if he were to return), paralysis and inertia remain the more likely military responses at this time.

NOT MUCH MORE MUDDLING

¶8. (S) COMMENT: At present, Monja's resignation remains the only clear path to resuming negotiations, but Rajoelina's departure might become the more likely scenario as this impasse continues. In the context of Maputo II, when it was suggested to Monja that he step aside for a consensus Prime Minister, he made clear to Rajoelina that the two either stayed in office together, or left together. While this played in political circles as an expression of his solidarity with their revolutionary movement, a more accurate interpretation would be as a threat: either Rajoelina keeps him as PM, or Monja would make sure that Rajoelina's career ended with his. Of the scenarios outlined above, the least tenable is for the HAT to simply muddle on; indeed, something has to give. Growing opposition agitation, internal jockeying within the HAT, and solid international condemnation suggest that either Rajoelina or Monja may make a decisive move in the coming days or weeks. END COMMENT.
MARQUARDT